1:Nimuendajú E-5 (1941-1942) 1952.
SQ20 Tucuna SQ20

VIII. LIFE CYCLE

Pregnancy

After intercourse, conception depends on the will of the goddess ta-ë'; it is she who gives the fetus its body and soul. When, overburdened with tasks, ta-ë' grows careless, the child is born with defects in mind or body. 842 [776]

We have already noted (pp. 22 and 46) the effects of a pregnant woman's intrusion in a clay pit or at maize planting, but on the whole there are few restrictions for her. She eats peppers lest the fetus become too fat, which would complicate birth; she eats the tripes of the alligator (jacaré-tinga) so that the child shall be born with a clear skin; and drinking the water of the *cipó barí* during pregnancy produces the same effect, as does staring at persons of white skin. Whoever eats double bananas will have only daughters. A real diet during pregnancy appears never to have been prescribed. If a girl is bitten by a type of ant called kaë'na, she will subsequently have children of a dark complexion. 843 [825]

Voluntary abortion.—A woman sometimes produces abortion in order to avoid the shame of having a "disqualified" child, i.e., one that belongs to no clan because its father is a Neobrazilian. Thus, an Indian girl named Neca, of the Rio Jacurapá, finding herself pregnant by a Neobrazilian, confessed her condition to her mother; both then concealed the affair from the girl's father, whom they feared, because he was a somewhat violent man. When Neca could no longer hide her pregnancy, the mother took her into the garden patch, where she succeeded in aborting the child by treading on the girl's belly. 847

According to legend, after an abortion, the cadaver of the fetus goes to ta-ë', who cooks it in a pot until it disintegrates. When the pan becomes full, the goddess keeps it until the death of the sinner, and thus addresses the soul when it arrives: "Thou hast slain the child I gave thee; now eat of thy property!" The sinful mother must eat the stew to the last morsel, however much she may beg and wail that she can eat no more. 847 775

Twins.—Twins (ta tarë'/pị; tarë, two) are not overly welcome since they increase the mother's work, but they are not killed. I myself knew a married couple in Igarapé de São Jeronymo who had twins; the reason was given me by an Indian, who asserted that the mother, while [illegible] child, had eaten double bananas. Others simply say that twins are due only to the will of ta-ë'. 845

Birth

When parturition is near, the husband erects a temporary platform close to the ground and hidden in a thicket some thirty paces behind the house. As soon as the pains begin, the woman is conducted there, where her hammock and mosquito bar are rigged up, and a piece of tururí bark cloth is spread over the platform. Her mother, aunt, or eldest sister attends her, the husband remaining in the house. If there are difficulties, a medicine man is sent for; smoking a tauary cigarette, he makes gestures with his hands as if he were opening some invisible object from below. 844 [755]

Blows on the back with the mouth of a manioc press are also recommended in difficult labor. The woman squats on her heels on the platform, with her arms